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competition from the Scrap Iron Merchants' Association? If so, will the Government be pleased to depute a Geologist as soon as possible to make an enquiry into the matter and ascertain whether good iron can be manufactured in the locality."

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" A Geologist has already been deputed to go into the question and the Government will give effect to the recommendations of this officer during the current field-season."

Relief to the fishermen in the West Coast.

* 472 *Q.*—SRI K. P. GOPALAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government have taken any statistics regarding the acute unemployment now prevailing among the fishermen in the West Coast; and

(*b*) the relief measures taken by the Government?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" (*a*) No statistics have been taken regarding the unemployment position among the fishermen of the Malabar district. But in view of certain representations received regarding the distress prevailing among them in the matter was enquired into by the Collector of Malabar and the enquiry showed that there is distress to some extent among the fishermen all along the Malabar Coast due to the poor catches of fish during the rainy season. This, however, appears to be a normal affair almost every year.

" (*b*) A sum of Rs. 5,940 has been distributed to the deserving fishermen families out of the allotments to the Malabar district from the State Famine Relief Fund and Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for thatching their huts. The Government further authorized the Collector of Malabar to utilize a sum of Rs. 4,020 available with him from the State Famine Relief Fund for giving financial help for the deserving fishermen families for thatching their huts and also for supply of free midday meals to the fishermen children studying in the Fisheries Schools in Malabar district to the extent possible."

Agricultural statistics in Malabar.

* 473 *Q.*—SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP : Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state—

(*a*) how far the pilot scheme of collecting agricultural statistics in Malabar has progressed; and

(*b*) whether the Government will be pleased to place the details on the table of the House?

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THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" (*a*) There is no such scheme in Malabar district. But a scheme for conducting a survey of the pepper crop in the West Coast is under the consideration of the Government.

" (*b*) In view of the answer to clause (*a*) of the question this does not arise."

Issue of licences for opening new rice mills.

* 474 *Q.*—SRI M. NARAYANAN NAMBIAR : Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state with reference to the answers to the supplementary questions to question No. 385, answered on 26th March 1954—

(*a*) whether the Government have arrived at any decision regarding the issue of licences to rice mills; and

(*b*) if so, what it is?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" (*a*) & (*b*) At present there is no ban on the issue of licences for opening of new rice mills or the expansion of the existing rice mills in this State. The question whether a ban could or should be imposed for the sake of encouraging hand-pounding of rice is under the examination of the Planning Commission and the All-India Khadi and Village Industries Board. The Government of India have also appointed a Committee to examine in detail the various problems connected with the milling of rice. The State Government will take necessary action after considering the results of these enquiries."

SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP :—" May I know how many new licences have been granted by this Government in a year? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" I would like to have notice, Sir."

Development of village ghanis.

* 475 *Q.*—SRI M. NARAYANAN NAMBIAR : Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government have any scheme for the development of village *ghanis;* and

(*b*) if so, whether a copy of the same will be placed on the table of the House?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" (*a*) Yes, Sir.

" (*b*) The details of the scheme are briefly as follows :—

' It has been proposed to set up 30 demonstration *chekku* centres in select National Extension Service and Community Project Blocks. Each centre will be a combined production and training centre. Seven hundred and fifty oil mongers will be trained in the use of the improved Wardha type *chekkus* during the next year. The scheme includes